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## INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN ITALY IN 1824.

[TRANSLATION OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY A GERMAN IN ROME.]

[Concluded from page 132.]

THERE being neither in Rome nor any other cities of Italy public concerts, the orchestras are not at all practised in the execution of symphonies. They would play a symphony of Haydn or Mozart, even after a number of rehearsals, if at all, so that they would not be known. The only instrumental music that they give are the so-called symphonies, i. e. overtures of operas, which they have played for more than fifty years in Rome. These may be heard in the theatre Italique, where there is a drama every evening, besides the opera, or at the fireworks, given during the three summer months, in the Mausoleum in August, or when, for a rarity, there is a public concert, a case which happened once during a year here in Rome. They know them by heart, but play them as though they were asleep. The first among them is that of the *Orazj* and *Curiazj*, by Cimarosa; and they are not a little proud of their execution of this overture. In fact this fresh, lively, and very pretty symphony sounds very well from the distance, (for instance, in the Mausoleum.) But if we compare their execution of it with that of the orchestra

at the Italian theatre\* in Paris, we find a difference like day and night.

Still more striking than their deficient execution, is the negligence, and the total want of enthusiasm in the members of the Roman or any Italian orchestras. In the Paris orchestra the members stretch as it were, all their artistic feelers forward, to catch the least hint of the leader. In the Italian orchestra every one goes his own way; they tune during an air di bravura, converse with each other, even while they play, and when they like to take a little rest, they lay the instrument down. They have neither artistic enthusiasm, nor that mechanical discipline, which is necessarily required, where the fulfilment of an object depends on the simultaneous action of many.

These faults are mainly owing to the unfitness of the Italian or-

\* I have more than once mentioned the unsurpassed excellence of this the first of all orchestras in the world. Even the best performances of other orchestras appear rough and unfinished compared with this. When I came to Paris, all the German orchestras were well known to me, with the exception of those in Vienna; I had seen in particular the orchestra in Cassel brought to a high state of perfection under the late Reichardt,\* and have always had a great predilection and, I flatter myself, some talent that way. The first opera, which I heard in Paris was *Il Matrimonio segreto*. The very symphony surprised me so much, that the bright tears of joy started to my eyes. Not alone the time was taken with a rapidity of which I had hitherto no idea, but also that number of figures in quavers (the very first of which is immensely difficult on account of the necessary precision of the violins among themselves, and more especially of the first and second violins,) was played in so exact a conformity, that I immediately found, I had hitherto drawn by far too narrow limits for musical execution. Every subsequent opera confirmed me in my opinion of its eminence. Mozart's operas in particular, and among them *Figaro*, are played with truly wonderful skill. This orchestra is the only one which can produce Haydn's and Mozart's symphonies with that precision and execution, which they require. The leader of it is the violinist Grasset; a man who is neither as violin player, nor as musician eminent; another proof, that, to form a good orchestra, requires neither a great composer nor an eminent player.—*The Author*.

\* This association, consisting mostly of young eminent musicians, with youthful enthusiasm, excited by the brilliancy of the whole establishment, and (note that!) well paid, gave performances, which stand in my remembrance the nearest I ever heard to those of the orchestra of the Italian opera at Paris. Some of the artists among them, afterwards acquired great fame, for instance, Fesca, Thurner, Keller, the brothers Schunk, and others, not to mention the veteran Maucourt, in his time the Viotti of Germany, and who led the band.

chestra directors. I will mention some of the greatest evils, which are found in the Italian orchestras.

In the Paris opera orchestras, the director, before beginning the symphony, gives a sign, three or more times, not audible, but only visible. The first directs the musicians to make ready,—the second to put the bow on the violins, or the wind instruments to the lips—the third to begin. If he sees any obstacle in the orchestra, he waits with the third sign, until it is removed; so that they may all begin with one accent. By these different signs the public is also prepared for the beginning. Imperious *st! st!* are heard from all sides, to command silence. A moment of expectation ensues, and the overture begins amidst a general silence, in which the humming of a bee would be heard. This preparation of mind and body enables the audience to enjoy the overture from beginning to end with undisturbed attention. A natural consequence is, that the musicians, excited by this expectation, play the overture in the greatest enthusiasm.—But how is it in Italy?—After having received the sign to begin, from the stage, the leader knocks with might and main with his bow on his tin candlestick, without giving any previous hint to the musicians, and immediately after begins the symphony himself, not in the least caring whether any one else is ready to draw the bow at the same time. This heart-rending knocking at the candlestick is repeated before each following number of the opera; nay, in the great opera, where the director sits at the piano *forté*, twice, once by him and once by the leader, who has not the score, but merely an extra violin part with the solos of the other instruments marked in it before him.

In Paris the violoncello which accompanies the simple recitativo gives only the fundamental base; in Italy, however, these men take the opportunity, otherwise seldom offered, to make the chords of the recitativos the fundament of concerted variations, which they spin out to such length that the singer is actually obliged sometimes to stop his recitativo to give the violoncellist time to finish his flourish.

The rest of the musicians sprawl about during these recitativos under the benches in the orchestra, in order to converse with each other, to offer a pinch of snuff, or to play a joke upon each other. On hearing the clapping on the candlestick they rush from all corners to their seats, but two thirds of them generally come too late; for they either in their hurry overturn a desk, or a candlestick, or throw the music from the desk, or they tread on the corns of their

colleague, who forthwith begins a violent quarrel; or they do some other mischief. In the Paris orchestras the musicians are only allowed to leave their seats, where it is utterly necessary.

The Italian musicians, taking great care for their heads, like all Italians, keep them always covered with a red cap, which gives them a curious appearance, like the French Jacobins of 1790 and 1793.

From all I have said it will be naturally concluded that they tune in the orchestra itself. This is done even in Germany, in some of the greatest and best orchestras of the south! The Paris orchestras tune in a distant chamber, so that the audience do not hear anything about it.

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#### APOLOGUE OF JEAN-PAUL RICHTER.

[FROM THE MUSICAL LIBRARY.]

One day the guardian genius of all who possess strong sensibility thus addressed Jupiter:—"Father divine! bestow on thy poor human creatures a language more expressive than any they now possess, for they have only words signifying how they suffer, how they enjoy, and how they love." "Have I not given them tears?" replied the deity, "tears of pleasure, of pain, and the softer ones that flow from the tender passion?" The genius answered, "O god of men! tears do not sufficiently speak the overflowings of the heart; give, I thee supplicate, to man a language that can more powerfully paint the languishing and impassioned wishes of a susceptible soul,—the recollections, so delightful, of infancy,—the soft dreams of youth, and the hopes of another life, which mature age indulges while contemplating the last rays of the sun, as they sink in the ocean,—give them, father of all! a new language of the heart." At this moment the celestial harmonies of the spheres announced to Jupiter the approach of the Muse of Song. To her the god immediately made a sign, and thus uttered his behests:—"Descend on earth, O Muse, and teach mankind thy language." And the Muse of Song descended to earth, taught us her accents, and from that time the heart of man has been able to speak.

## ON THE ROMANTIC IN MUSIC.

[FROM THE GERMAN OF AUG. KAHLELT.]

When Carl Maria von Weber opened to himself a new path, by that work of genius, *Der Freyschutz*, what is called romantic music was by several stamped as belonging to a peculiar school, and many an unsuccessful imitation was attempted under the title "Romantic Opera." The wonderful and the legendary were alleged to be the necessary foundation of this species: spirits, and whenever possible, Satan himself, were essential ingredients. This kind of opera was pronounced to be the only truly German, and opposed to the comic conversation-opera, and the heroic opera.

I cannot see what is to be gained by such a classification, or that it will at all tend to enlighten us on the question of the real essence of music.

The essence of the romantic was sought for in various contingencies, or single peculiarities; the first united with the second renders plain the conception of the romantic.

My own views of romantic art, briefly shown, may serve to justify what I have said.

First, I must state, that, according to my views, the romantic and musical art are akin to each other, and that all music is of a romantic nature,—a proposition that will seem paradoxical to many, but which I shall endeavor to demonstrate.

The source of all the fine arts may be traced to the worship of God,—to religion. From this they have sprung; from this were formed their first rude beginnings, and the general religious feelings of a people have also given an individual coloring to their arts. The tie of religion and art is so close, that even those who will not acknowledge it, must feel its power. The religion of antiquity was essentially a natural religion: only among the Oriental nations the traces of a belief in divine manifestations display themselves. The art, which sprung from this natural religion, could not conceive other than sensual deities; it sought among natural forms for the expressions of divinity, and hence in works of art the nearest approach to nature's masterpieces was held to be the noblest design.

According to Aristotle the *beautiful* consists in the imitation of nature, a view of the matter, which, in the days of skepticism, e. g. among the French, revived in all its power.

Plato's views of art and the beautiful are opposed to these: he assumes original forms of beauty in the soul of the artist, which he has brought with him into the world, and which spring from a former and better state. Thus, he regards most the ideal, while Aristotle chiefly regards the real.

Grecian art in general bears the character of an imitation, which is so perfect, that we should vainly strive to equal it, since we want the eye of the Grecian artist. The summit of human strength and beauty is, with the Greeks, divine: hence their heroes are allied to the gods; hence their gods, though in heaven, live after the manner of men.

The spirit of Grecian art displays itself in works of architecture. This last, which most obviously exhibits the forms of nature, bears very evidently in itself the elements of the national spirit, and hence ancient art is in general called plastic.

But with respect to the music of the ancients—what was it? Glf. Weber has, in his theory of composition, long ago called our attention to this point, namely, that the key to any closer acquaintance with the art is lost, and that our endeavors to attain it must fail. We have, we almost say, less proof that we understand accurately the expressions of Ptolemy, Plato, and Plutarch, relative to music, than that we have sufficiently, and in the spirit of the ancients, mastered the quantity and mode of expressing Greek and Latin words. The scanty remains of ancient music afford us no view of that art; and to increase the confusion, the christian beginnings in music have been often mingled with those remains, and under the name of "Greek" proudly displayed themselves as the result of investigation in antiquities. Von Winterfeld's *Joh. Gabrieli* will contribute much to the clearing up of such doubts.

If we consider attentively the choruses of the Greek tragedies, and combine the expressions relative to music uttered by Plato in the third book of his Republic we shall soon be convinced that the essential beauty of that music consisted in the rhythm, hence in the systematic motion. Indeed the same spirit, which in ancient sculpture announced itself in space, speaks in the rhythm, but not otherwise in motion, therefore in time. The rhythm of antiquity, so far as we can obtain an idea of it by investigating the laws of nature, is of a plastic nature. Hence music was, as it were, rendered visible by the peculiar arts of motion, namely, dancing and mimicry. Music was but the servant of other arts; and though the ancients knew

the difference between high and low in sounds, we have nothing to justify us in assuming that they knew anything of a harmonic base, on which what we call melody depends. Rhythm would display itself in tones, but the knowledge of the combination of tones was reserved for a later age. The unison of the Eastern nations of the present day now affords an instance of that infancy in music.

It is well known how music displayed itself simultaneously with the rites of Christianity; how music was the art in which Christian worship was first developed. The power of the musical spirit was alone calculated to present to the senses the Christian idea of Deity; while in ancient times this was done by sculpture, when the divinities, in the form of men, filled the situations of men. This, in the Christian world, could alone be accomplished by an art which had for its end the representation of the Infinite; an art, the elements of which are varying and fluctuating—that is to say, music. Sound dies away like the existence of man. A pictorial composition remains fixed to our gaze, and thus embraces the forms of earth. A musical composition has nothing which it can imitate; its artist can only represent sensual phenomena, when he has first idealised them.

It was natural enough that the musical art should exert an influence over other arts. Poetry shows us this in the origin of rhyme. Harmonic euphony began to gain ground on the rhythmic, and showed itself not only in rhyme, but in alliteration and assurance. Now did all art strive to elevate man to the Infinite—to God; as the ancients, degrading Deity, sought to approximate it to man. Jean-Paul and Frederic Schlegel have long ago shown that the Gothic style of architecture was designed to express that endeavor.

In like manner Christian art produced what is called romantic art, which is by many totally misunderstood. The essence of the romantic art depends on the endeavor of man to soar above the sphere of his knowledge; it strives to acquaint us with the unattainable, which no intellect can comprehend.

The opinion will be found correct, that the power of music completes that of language; that the kingdom of the former begins, where that of the latter ends; that without a sweet fancy being itself in the magic of sound, no genuine musical work can exist. If we call Beethoven the master of all masters, the reason is, that he has exhibited, in the plainest view, that striving after the infinite. Every work of art requires a form, but to go so far above it, without annihilating it, was reserved for Beethoven alone. I place him above

S. Bach, because the genius of the latter was more immediately subservient to divine worship; because he did not lose himself like Beethoven, in the magic of sound. I place him above all, because he is independent of words, and lets his inarticulate sounds speak freely for themselves.

Instrumental music, as E. T. A. Hoffmann has justly remarked, is the most romantic of all arts. However, among vocal composers there is more than one who is entitled to stand by Beethoven's side. If he was the mightiest in instrumental music, so was Mozart in another sphere. No other composer has expressed the romantic spirit as he has in *Don Giovanni*.

Among the moderns the romantic spirit, has appeared in Weber and Spohr: with the former it is almost unbridled; with the latter it is more confined.

Mendelssohn and Löwe are to be reckoned among those of the present day. Yet, in all modern art the free *unconscious* power of creation has become rare. The intellectual education on the one hand, and the mechanical on the other, plainly exert an injurious influence. That fancy, which makes individuality forget itself, becomes more and more scarce, like that pious childish faith, in which religion first takes root. The age begins to hate the very essence of the romantic, it desires the bodily, the sensual. To satisfy this desire, thousands of musicians are prepared and ready at all times. With these the very mechanism of music has become living, and the intellect only reckons upon the effect.

A new effect, however, constitutes neither novelty nor originality in a work of art; therefore, that the romantic should be misunderstood was inevitable. We had learned to expect from it outward signs, spirits and wonders, above all things. Thus Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* must be called a romantic opera, though there is not the least trace of the romantic spirit to be found in any part.

Let us then be less liberal with a name which conveys, above all others, such weighty, and mighty praise. Let us consider that the romantic is the inmost essence of music, that it is the mark which distinguishes all modern art from the ancient: hence, in few words, that in our days every work of art meriting the name, must be called romantic, and then that appellation is understood as being the mark of every good work of art in our time.

It will be objected that the term *romantic* will in fact not at all suit many of our most modern works of art. Alas! such is the case.

They have not proceeded from the exaltation of our souls to the infinite; they cleave to this earth; they live but an apparent life; they are no productions of the spirit of art, but of intellect, experience and labor. This is particularly remarked in the greater and more comprehensive works. For small, light pictures, for short, feeling songs, which flash like lightning through the night, the powers of feeling and creating are yet sufficient. But even this losing one's self in a number of trifling designs, without being able to apply one's self to a single great work, is somewhat dangerous. The arts go begging among each other; we *seek* the matter, being unable to *produce* it; while Raphael painted the Madonna innumerable times, yet ever new,—ever with animation. We are poor in matter, because the enjoyers of art are insatiable. Thus our matter becomes gradually more real, more prosaic.

Music is a product of Christianity; instrumental music a product of the German spirit. The bias of the German character to religion here displayed itself in its noblest form. Let us, in a skeptical age, neither in life, nor in art, be robbed of our faith in what is most sacred.

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#### REVIEW.

*The Vocal School, or, Pestalozzian Method of Instruction in the Elements of Vocal Music: embracing a practical and philosophical demonstration of the philosophy of the scale; also a part devoted to musical elocution, based on the elementary analysis of Dr. Rush; illustrated by a great variety of examples and exercises, and designed as a Manual of Instruction for Teachers and Scholars, by H. W. DAY. Boston, Otis, Broaders & Co.*

All our instruction books, vocal or instrumental, printed on this side the ocean, take more the form of instructions in the elements of music, than of individual instructions for a particular voice or instrument. We are not yet far enough advanced in music to feel the want of instructions and exercises for the higher and more refined cultivation of the voice. The above mentioned book is no exception to this general rule, for it teaches more the elementary understanding of music and singing, than a systematic cultivation of the voice.

The general arrangement is similar to that of the Boston Academy's Manual of Music, which appears generally to be the model

for similar works. The whole subject is divided into four parts: Rhythm, Dynamics, Melody, and Musical Elocution; the latter being made in the Manual the second part of the Dynamics. In the third part occurs a philosophical demonstration of the scale, and on this and the part devoted to musical elocution the author rests in particular the merits of the book.

We are not fully convinced of the judiciousness of putting the chapter on Melody, after those on Rhythm and Dynamics. Music is the art of combining tones successively or simultaneously—melody and harmony. A tone is a sound of which the height is distinguished, or a sound, all the vibrations of which are of equal duration—not the distance from one sound to another, as is generally assumed, and even in common phrase when we speak of a tone or half a tone—this is an interval. The pitch is therefore the first elementary principle of music, and a general conception of this subject at least should be given, before proceeding to the other chapters. No practical example can be given without applying this principle. Mr. Day has, however, only followed the general example, and we think he is right in making Dynamics the second chapter, after once having made Rhythm the first, and thus considering both as preparatory to that on Melody.

Giving to musical elocution a chapter by itself, is certainly what the importance of the subject demands, but the analysis is not quite correct—for musical expression does not exclude the dynamics, its chief means rather consist of them.

We shall not enter into a minute examination of the chapter on rhythm; it is, as the author observes, very similar to that of the Boston Academy's Manual, only going a little more into detail in its explanations. It is, however, not so full as the latter; for it does not at all touch upon the rhythmical construction of musical phrases, sections, periods, &c. This is not only very necessary for the composer to know, but also for the performer; for on the symmetrical structure of all the parts which combined form the whole, on the part of the composer, and on the correct comprehension of these symmetrical sections on the part of the performer, depends much of the effect of a piece. This subject is as yet very much neglected here; but it is certainly of as much importance, as the knowledge of prosody to the poet and the actor.

But one other remark on this chapter; the accent is correctly explained. The accented parts of the measure are *naturally* sung

louder than the other. But yet this is often misunderstood, and the accented parts of the measure are sung with more than natural emphasis, which, by destroying the rhythmical symmetry of the musical phrases, gives the performance a coarse, vulgar effect. Teachers should take particular care to correct this misunderstanding.

We will now examine what is characteristic of the work—the philosophy of the scale. The author enters upon this demonstration to satisfy “the inquiring mind of the diligent and interested scholar,” seeking “to know *why* these sounds are made thus and so; or *why* it is natural, or *why* such an order of succession is better than any other.” He is generally told “that it is so, i. e. it is natural.” We should think this answer, being the true one, would be in many cases a sufficient one. The pupil *feels* that the law of nature requires the scale to be just so; his ear will revolt at any other proportions and relations, and for all practical purposes of the performer it is sufficient to lay down the scale as a principle. The professional man, however, should most certainly make himself acquainted with the nature of sounds, even to their very fundamental laws; and to him the science of acoustics, which treats of them, must at once be an important and an interesting study.

The author bases his philosophy of the scale on the so-called by-tones, or on the secondary vibrations which are heard in striking a bell. We would object to this: first, because the vibrations of the bell itself will not be understood by the pupil, not being sufficiently open to ocular demonstration; secondly, because it requires a more experienced ear than the pupil can be supposed to have, to recognise the pitch of the by-tones, which are not distinctly heard, and which pass quickly away; and thirdly because after all the pupil has, after taking these vibrations themselves for granted which he cannot see, further to take for granted that they can be counted and stand in certain fixed relations to each other. We would, therefore, prefer the vibrations of a string for the means of illustration, as being more open to ocular demonstration.

The science of acoustics is based upon the comparison between the different phenomena of sound, as perceived by the ear, and those perceived by the eye; from this comparison we are enabled to discover the laws by which these phenomena are governed. In explaining the philosophy of the scale, therefore, the object is not so much to prove, *that* the scale is correct, but to prove *why* it is so. We hear it is so, and we hear that any other scale would be wrong.

Acoustics teach us *why* it is so; and in order to make us satisfied with the explanations of this science we must be fully convinced that its foundation is correct. The vibrations of the lowest notes of a bass viol may be seen, and we can also *see* that they are more rapid as they rise higher. We can by instruments, ingeniously invented for the purpose, *count* them, and thus we find that the rapidity of vibrations and consequently the height of the tone stands in an inverse ratio to the length of the string; that is, all other things being equal, a string of half the length will vibrate twice as quick, or will give that sound which our ear has found to be the octave, and so forth.

By these means we establish the following proportions:

Our ear perceives	1st.	3d.	5th.	8th.
Length of string	1	$\frac{4}{3}$	$\frac{2}{3}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
Rapidity of vibrations taking one at	24	30	36	48

and thus we arrive at the same conclusions, which our author sets down at once as determined. Starting from these proportions, a demonstration of the scale is given both of concords and discords, which is at once clear and interesting. But added to it is a *geometrical* demonstration of the scale which we should call altogether useless, and first, because the pupil will in all probability not understand it; secondly, because there is no kind of application made of it, and the amateur pupil would only learn it with difficulty, in order to forget it again, it being of no use to him.

In comparing the rest of this chapter with the corresponding one of the Boston Academy's Manual, we find again as in that of Rhythm, that the subject is treated broader, but not fuller. The first principles of harmony (rather the *combination* than the *succession* merely of chords)—the explanation of essential and transient notes—are either not at all touched upon, or but very slightly. In speaking of the different parts and the voices for the same, the author says: "The voices of boys are most suitable for this part, the alto, being stronger, and harmonizing better with other parts, than female voices." This is a mistake. The female alto voice, properly so called, is just as different from the treble, as the bass is from the tenor in male voices. The difference does not only consist in the pitch, but also and particularly so in the character of its tones in their coloring. (Timbre in French.) This proper female alto voice blends and harmonizes best in choral song; but it is not so frequently met with as soprano voices, and we find it here still more rare than in Europe; and therefore boys' voices are taken, even in Europe, latterly, often

as substitutes. They have, however, never that fulness and mellowness of tone, which the true female altos have.

A short chapter on the Chant is very acceptable and practical; but for the fourth part we would willingly prefer the much shorter article in the Boston Academy's Manual, on account of its greater practicability. The article is overloaded with rules and classifications, which are very good as a philosophical analysis of the subject, but impede its practical applicability.

In concluding, we do not think the work calculated to supersede The Boston Academy's Manual; the philosophical illustration of the scale and the philosophical analysis of elocution are not of sufficient practical applicability to make it much more valuable to the choir, and otherwise, although it treats the different subjects broader, and still more in detail, than the Manual, yet it does not embrace any new, nor so many subjects as the latter.

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#### PROFESSOR BRONSON'S LECTURES.

The Lectures of Professor Bronson in Marlboro' Chapel on Oratory and Music, have created much interest, and some diversity of opinion. While he is held by many to be a mere pretender, others, and especially those who have attended his lessons, speak well of him, and say they have been benefited by his instructions. We have only been able to attend a part of his *lectures*, and therefore could only form an opinion from them. It may be fallacious, but such as it is, we lay it before our readers.

It strikes us then, that the professor is attempting a large business on rather a small capital. He pretends, or to speak more exactly what we mean, he believes himself to have made a new discovery; for we think he is sincere, and is persuaded that his discovery of the proper method of respiration is new and original. The dorsal and abdominal muscles are to be used in respiration, in preference of those of the chest; this, if we understand him, is the professor's theory.

Now, if we look into our physiological class books, say for instance, Hayward's Physiology, we find that there are three degrees of respiration—ordinary, full, and forced. The first is almost altogether effected by the contraction and expansion of the diaphragm alone. The diaphragm is an arched muscular partition between the

chest and abdomen; it extends in an oblique direction upward, is of an arched form, and becomes flattened or less concave when contracted during inspiration, thus enlarging the cavity of the chest, into which the atmospheric air immediately rushes. The action might be compared to that of a pair of bellows.

In full respiration, when more atmospheric air or breath is taken in at each inspiration, the cavity of the chest is by the contraction of the diaphragm alone not sufficiently enlarged, and the ribs must be expanded, to make it larger; this is chiefly done by short oblique muscles inserted, crossing each other, between the edges of the ribs—the external and internal intercostal muscles—and also by the dorsal and pectoral muscles which are inserted into the ribs, and therefore by their contraction draw the ribs upwards, and consequently enlarge the cavity of the chest.

In forced respiration almost all the muscles of the body are brought into action either immediately or indirectly by producing fixed points for the action of the proper muscles of respiration. Moreover, in contraction, the diaphragm presses down upon the abdominal organs, and the abdominal muscles being called into activity may force it back, and thus aid in expiration. This is done in some degree also in ordinary respiration; but we cannot see, nor do we learn from physicians that the abdominal muscles are otherwise directly active in respiration.

It seems to us, therefore, that the whole discovery of the Professor amounts to the very good, but not new rule, that the best economy of respiration consists in its keeping as much as possible in its natural state and regular course; in employing as little extra exertion and activity of the muscles, whose primary destination is for this process, as possible.

For the rest Professor Bronson employs in his lectures a great machinery of philosophical terms, he draws phrenology, magnetism, the science of mind and matter, all into his course; but he nowhere goes beyond the surface, generally not even beyond the name. He gives us many words, and but few ideas; he intimates that he could say much about these things, but he forbears to do it. This hurts his cause, giving it an air of charlatanry. His recitations furthermore are somewhat monotonous, and lack that variety in style which their subjects demand. We ascribe this to his want of physical power, but he pretends by his system to overcome that want of power.

His ideas of music appear also not sufficiently correct or digested; although his description of the origin of the voice appears to be nearly correct. We would refer our readers in this respect to the physiological article, translated from the German, in No. 30 of our present volume. He seems to consider, with many others, that the nature of speaking and singing sounds is exactly the same; and does not sufficiently distinguish between *sound* and *tone*. *Sound* is produced by any vibrations of sufficient rapidity to become audible; but this sound becomes a *tone* only, when each individual vibration is of equal duration with the rest, by which means its positive pitch is distinguished. In singing, the vocal chords, by which the human voice is produced, vibrate thus regularly; but in speaking the equality of their vibrations is in some hitherto undiscovered manner disturbed; and we have not so clearly defined *tones*, but only sounds approaching nearly to tones. We can discover in them a higher or lower pitch, but we cannot correctly assign to them any distinct and correctly pure tone. If Professor Bronson speaks, therefore, of the compass of his voice being five octaves, and produces in proof of his assertion very low and very high sounds, his mistake is, that he produces only sounds, and not clearly defined tones: and furthermore, we can ascribe to the voice only that compass, through the whole scale of which it can pass. It is not sufficient that I can produce a very low sound; if I cannot give a distinct tone, and go on producing the successive tones of the scale, those sounds are beyond my compass. On this distinction between sound and tone rests all the beauty of musical tones; as well in musical instruments as in performances. That instrument in which by reverberation and its construction the equality of vibrations is least disturbed will be the best, and that player who knows how to give the greatest equality of vibrations to his tones will be the best player, as far as regards the production of tone.

Thus we see that Professor Bronson's lectures must be unsatisfactory. We can, however, very well imagine that his lessons are instructive and useful. For he has a wide and highly important, and hitherto much neglected field before him—the economy of respiration, and the flexibility of the human voice in speaking.

True economy of respiration consists in quick, yet not forced inspiration and slow expiration. The first must be done quick at proper places of the musical phrases or of the sentences in language, and inaudibly; the chest must be well filled; yet the contraction of

the muscles must not be effected too suddenly, or by too violent a jerk or effort. In expiration the breath must gently flow off from the lungs, but should not be sustained so long without a fresh inspiration that the blood will become deteriorated for want of sufficient oxygenation; this would prove immediately injurious to health. The neglect of this economy has cost many a life, and it should be systematically practised and exercised by singers and speakers.

In oratory, the effect of the speaker depends first, of course, on having himself fully understood and felt, the ideas which he utters, and made his own. But it depends also on the flexibility of his voice, to give to his sounds those inflexions which the natural expression of the affections indicated by his words demand. This expression is manifested both in dynamics and pitch—that is, in greater or less fulness and loudness, or in higher or lower pitch of the sounds. Being natural, it is not capricious, but uniform, and subjected to certain laws, which we may learn by observation. On this knowledge, and on the power over our vocal organs, to give to our speaking those inflexions of sound, which are demanded by the subject, depends the science of oratory.

If, therefore, Professor Bronson teaches in his lessons the true economy of respiration, and the true laws of oratory; if he superintends the correct practice and exercise of true principles, his instructions must be very valuable and useful, however unsatisfactory his lectures may have been.

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### CONCERTS.

We have only to notice two Concerts; one for Military Music, by Mr. F. S. Burditt, and one by the Boston Academy of Music.

The first distinguished itself by one very good, and original quickstep of the concert giver's composition. His arrangement of Neukomm's battle symphony was not so good; it lacked fulness in harmony, and was, besides, poorly executed. The concert did not reconcile us to military music in the concert room.

The Boston Academy's Concert was a very good one. In the Psalm of Fesca the beautiful tenor solo was spoiled by the false notes of the double bass. The soprano solo in the chorus preceding the last fugue, was drowned by the heavy accompaniment of the chorus, the instruments, and the organ. We would also prefer to have the recitatives sung without the organ, merely with the fundamental base, by the bass instruments.

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### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We are much obliged to a correspondent in Albany for his interesting letter on musical performances there, and which shall appear in our next.